

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Venezuela book fair panel discusses 'Workers Power' —PAGE 7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Washington deploys tanks to Afghan war

BY DOUG NELSON

November 19—U.S.-led forces are intensifying offensive operations in southern Afghanistan in an effort to deal lasting blows to the Taliban ahead of the usual winter ebb in combat activity. The use of more heavy-handed tactics, particularly in Kandahar Province, is resented by many Afghans and has sparked public criticism from Afghan president Hamid Karzai.

For the first time, the U.S. military is employing M1 Abrams tanks, starting with 16 in northern Helmand Province. The tanks are equipped with 120-mm guns capable of demolishing houses more than a mile away.

The main offensive is centered in the districts surrounding Kandahar, the birthplace and heartland of the Taliban. In two districts north and west of Kandahar, nearly 1,000 families have fled in the last month alone. As U.S.-led forces advanced and pushed Taliban combatants from new areas, booby-trapped homes awaited their

Continued on page 6

Capitalists 'recover' on backs of workers

White House lauds GM auto bailout



In video posted on White House Web site, President Barack Obama's economic advisor Austan Goolsbee defends government bailout of GM, claiming it saved "American jobs."

BY SETH GALINSKY

The White House and the big-business press claim the United States is in an economic recovery. Asserting that the billion-dollar bailouts are beginning to bear fruit, the White House has even posted a video on its Web site titled "Rebirth of the American Auto Industry."

The bondholders, banks, and owners of industry are experiencing a

recovery in their profits for the time being. But these are built on ever shakier economic foundations and at the expense of working people.

A case in point is General Motors, which launched a large stock offering November 18, putting 400 million plus shares on the market at more than \$33 a pop. In a variation on "What's good for GM is good for America," Linda Killian, portfolio manager at Renaissance Capital, crowed, "It's good for the stock market. It's good for the equities market. . . . So it's good for all of us."

The U.S. Treasury Department, which took control of nearly 61 percent of GM stock in 2009 as part of the \$50 billion bailout, sold half of its

Continued on page 9

Senate approves paying Black farmers, but 'fight is not over'

BY SUSAN LAMONT

DINWIDDIE COUNTY, Virginia—The U.S. Senate finally approved funding to settle a discrimination suit filed 13 years ago by Black farmers against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

"We have got to be prepared that the war isn't over," said farmer Lester Bonner a day after the Senate decision. "After all these years and all the things that have been done to us,

we've learned to expect just about anything. The USDA even started taking part of my wife Rosa's monthly Social Security payments to repay a loan I cosigned with my father back in 1997."

Bonner filed for Chapter 13 bankruptcy several years ago as a way to stop these and other threatened moves by the USDA against him.

Lester Bonner, 63, and his brother

Continued on page 9



Black farmers and supporters at September 23 action in Washington, D.C., protesting government discrimination. Holding banner are farmers Lester Bonner, left, and John Bonner, right.

S. Korean military provokes Pyongyang

BY CINDY JAQUITH

November 23—The U.S.-backed regime in South Korea threatened more military strikes against North Korea today in a dangerous escalation of the attacks on the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

Artillery fire was exchanged between South Korean troops on the island of Yeonpyeong and North Korean soldiers. The DPRK charged Seoul "recklessly fired into our sea area."

The South Korean government acknowledged firing test shots, but

U.S. HANDS OFF N. KOREA
Editorial —p. 9

claimed they didn't reach North Korean territory. According to South Korean officials, artillery fire from the North killed two South Korean soldiers, wounded several other soldiers and civilians, and damaged buildings. South Korean president Lee Myung-bak ordered strikes on North Korea's missile base if the DPRK made any "indication of further provocation," according to a presidential aide. Washington demanded Pyongyang "halt its belligerent action."

In an official statement, Pyongyang warned that if South Korean forces enter its territory in the slightest degree it would "unhesitatingly continue

Continued on page 4

New Zealand: 29 are trapped in coal mine amid speedup

BY MIKE TUCKER

AUCKLAND, New Zealand, November 22—A massive explosion ripped through the Pike River coal mine November 19. Four days later there has still been no contact with 29 miners trapped underground.

Two other miners, who had been some distance from the blast, were able to struggle to the surface after initially being knocked unconscious and overcome by carbon monoxide. It is thought that faulty ventilation systems led to a buildup of methane gas that ignited.

Police and mining officials refused to allow mine rescue teams to enter the mine, saying that high gas levels posed the risk of another explosion. Some coworkers and families of the missing miners urged officials to allow the rescue crews in.

According to Daniel Rockhouse, one of the two miners who escaped, the missing miners were almost two

miles into the mine and the blast probably happened almost half a mile behind them.

The Pike River mine is in the Paparoa mountain range 30 miles north-east of Greymouth on the west coast of New Zealand's South Island. The

Continued on page 2

Also Inside:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Ireland gov't prepares major austerity moves | 3 |
| Union vote at Delta again falls short of majority | 4 |
| Guantánamo inmate convicted in civilian trial | 5 |
| Australia meeting expands military ties with U.S. gov't | 6 |

Deaths in U.S. mines rise despite gov't ‘safety’ plan

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Promising to improve coal mine safety inspections, the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) announced November 18 its “Rules to Live By II: Preventing Catastrophic Accidents.”

The first phase of “Rules to Live By” was launched at the beginning of the year. Since then 46 coal miners in the United States have been killed on the job, the second highest toll in this decade and just one miner behind the number who lost their lives in 2006.

The MSHA plan is based on a review of data from eight underground mining accidents in which five or more workers were killed between 2000 and 2009. “The goal,” states an MSHA news release, “is to prevent major accidents—from fires to explosions” with “enhanced enforcement efforts” to begin Jan. 1, 2011. The review does not include the April 5 explosion that killed 29 miners at Massey Energy’s Upper Big Branch Mine in Montcoal, West Virginia.

State and federal investigations into the Upper Big Branch explosion—the worst U.S. coal-mining disaster in 40 years—still drag on after nearly nine months. Massey is currently refusing to cooperate with MSHA tests on a longwall mining machine spray unit that is supposed to reduce explosive coal dust during production. MSHA has in turn threatened to seize control of the mine if the company does not comply.

Massey, meanwhile, is attempting to make the case that the explosion

had nothing to do with high methane gas levels. In a talk to a mining industry conference November 18, Massey CEO Don Blankenship claimed the blast was a natural occurrence, resulting from natural gas leaking into the area through a crack in the mining floor.

A similar attempt to wash its hands of responsibility was put forward by International Coal Group, the owners of the Sago Mine in West Virginia, where an explosion in 2006 killed 12 miners. The company argued the accident was caused by lightning.

The Upper Big Branch Mine has a long record of safety violations prior the April 5 blast, as well as unsafe working conditions since then. In early November the mine had to be evacuated as methane gas levels reached explosive levels.

In another development, MSHA for



Candlelight vigil for Upper Big Branch coal miners in Whitesville, West Virginia, April 7. Explosion at mine, which had history of high methane gas levels, was worst mine disaster in 40 years. Since that blast mine has been evacuated again for gas levels.

the first time ever is seeking a court order to close a coal mine because of unsafe working conditions. A preliminary injunction is being sought against Freedom Energy’s Mine no.1 in Pike County, Kentucky; the mine is owned by Massey Energy.

Over the past three years inspectors have issued 1,952 citations and 81 orders to close the mine. According to MSHA, seven miners have been injured as a result of falling roofs in the past two years. Six major roof falls have occurred there since August 11.

29 miners trapped in New Zealand mine blast

Continued from front page

region has been the center of coal mining in this country for more than a century.

Rising demand for high quality coking coal for steel production in China and India has seen a profit-driven push to accelerate the extraction of coal, with old mines being reworked and existing mines expanded. A little more than 10 miles from Pike River is the former Brunner mine, where 65 miners were killed in an explosion in 1896, the country’s worst mining disaster; and the Strongman mine,

where 19 miners were killed in 1967.

Pike River is a new mine that began shipping to Asia last year. It dispatched its first shipment of premium hard coking coal in February. An underground road tunnel, over a mile long, travels into the hillside to where mining begins. From the beginning the project has been marked by failure to meet construction schedules and over-ambitious production targets. As well, potentially explosive methane gas was found in greater volumes than expected as tunnelers neared the mine seam.

Behind schedule, and with funding due to run out in December, the company had sought to ratchet up production over recent weeks. It had just installed the first of two main underground fans to increase ventilation, enabling it to begin using hydraulic monitors, large water cannons that blast coal from the face.

Speaking to reporters November 22, Pike River chief executive Peter Whittall said that there had been no concerns leading up to the mine explosion. But others told a different story.

An Australian mine engineer with connections to the Pike River mine told the *New Zealand Herald* that operating standards were “extremely poor” and that miners had “severe concerns about safety.” He said there had been a number of incidents where methane had reached high levels over the past year.

“Two to three weeks ago the mine fans were out and the whole mine was gassed out,” he said, and “it took 20 hours to clear the mine.”

Grey District mayor Tony Kokshoorn told reporters November 21, “I have heard regularly over the last two or three years that this mine is unsafe, there’s far too much gas, there’s going to be a disaster here one day.”

Responding to a rising number of deaths and accidents in mines over recent years, the Engineering, Printing and Manufacturing Union, which organizes coal miners, has been calling for a return to the practice of government-appointed mine inspectors who are onsite at all times during mining and who check safety on each shift. The practice was dropped about 20 years ago.

THE MILITANT

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Militant/Lisa Rottach
Grain millers locked out by Roquette America and supporters march November 13 in Keokuk, Iowa.

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Ireland gov't prepares major austerity moves

BY PETE CLIFFORD

EDINBURGH, Scotland—As the Irish government begins talks with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and European Union (EU) for a bail-out of its banks, working people are bracing for a sharp assault on their standard of living. The loans the Irish government is seeking are estimated to be at least \$109 billion. Only last May the EU and IMF loaned Greece \$140 billion to avert a debt payment default there.

The Irish government was already planning major cuts in the budget prior to the announcement of the bailout. Among the measures under consideration are cutting the minimum wage by the equivalent of \$1.36 an hour, slashing pensions by 5 percent to 8 percent, reducing welfare benefits, cutting the wages and jobs of thousands of public sector workers, and raising taxes. The *Irish Daily Mail* called it “the budget to fleece us all.” The London *Independent* expressed the nervousness of many capitalists in Europe, stating, “There is an awful suspicion that even these moves may not be enough: the fear is the whole thing could go into freefall. Although the authorities are taking desperate measures, there is as yet no widespread Irish feeling that stability is about to be achieved anytime soon.”

Some 20,000 students, a substantial turnout for a country of 4 million people, marched through Dublin November 3 to protest plans to nearly double university fees. According to the BBC, many wore T-shirts reading, “Education, not Emigration.” Unemployment stands officially at 13.6 percent, the highest of any country in Europe except Spain and Slovakia. For the first time since 1996, Ireland faced net emigration last year. The Irish government expects some 100,000 to leave in the coming four years. Most are recent immigrants from eastern Europe.

Thousands of workers are expected to attend a demonstration sponsored

by the Irish Congress of Trades Unions November 27. Called under the banner “There is a better, fairer way,” this is the first major nationwide action the unions have called since 120,000 marched through Dublin in February 2009 to protest cuts in public sector wages at that time. Since 1987 the unions have participated in “national agreements” with the government and bosses’ organizations to set wage rates.

Ireland’s “Celtic Tiger” years of economic expansion in the 1990s were a product of export growth based on low corporate taxes and a credit-induced property boom. This collapsed in 2008 when Irish banks’ indebtedness to foreign institutions rose to 60 percent of gross domestic product. Most Irish banks are effectively under state control now and are again on the verge of collapse.

Ireland is the United Kingdom’s fifth largest export destination. Some \$120 billion in loans are outstanding from UK banks to Irish businesses. An article in the *Irish Independent* commented on what this means for the United Kingdom. “There is no other European country that stands to lose more if Ireland’s



Demonstration against education cuts in Dublin, Ireland, November 3.

economic problems worsen or the banking sector collapses,” it stated.

Many articles in the Irish big-business press have protested the loss of “Irish sovereignty,” mourning the end of the capitalist rulers’ illusions that the good days could be put together again. An editorial in the *Irish Times* asked whether this “was what the men of 1916 died for: a bail-out from the German chancellor and a few shillings of sympathy from the British chancellor on the side.” In 1916 Irish rebels led an unsuccessful uprising against British domina-

tion of Ireland.

In the face of this crisis, capitalist parties in opposition to the Fianna Fail government are making gains. The Irish Labour Party is Ireland’s most popular party now, with 32 percent support, according to a June opinion poll. Sinn Féin, the Irish nationalist party now in coalition with pro-British parties in the Northern Ireland Assembly, is seeking to gain also. Gerry Adams, its president, has announced he will stand for a seat in Dublin’s parliament in the upcoming elections.

Actions in Australia protest police brutality

BY LINDA HARRIS
AND MANUELE LASALO

BRISBANE, Australia—Some 130 people rallied here in Queensland November 13 as part of a national day of protest against police brutality and the use of Taser guns by cops. More than 100 people also demonstrated in Perth, Western Australia.

Cops have killed at least three people using Tasers in the last two years. In June 2009 Antonio Galeano died after being Tasered up to 28 times by police in Townsville, in northern Queensland.

The protests were called following the release of CCTV footage taken in 2008 of an Aboriginal man being Tasered 13 times after refusing a strip search in a Perth jail. The video was part of a report

by Western Australia’s Corruption and Crime Commission. The report found that police were increasingly using Tasers, especially on Indigenous people, to force suspects to comply with orders.

Sam Watson, a veteran Aboriginal activist who organized the Brisbane protest, reported that the previous day another Aboriginal man had been killed in a small New South Wales rural town. “Police used Tasers and capsicum [pepper spray] and then shot him dead,” Watson said. “We have to demand that the police be held accountable.”

“We rallied here in 1994 for Daniel Yock and in 2004 for Mulrunji Doomadgee,” Watson said. “Today we’re here again to demand that Hurley be tried again.”

Yock, a young Aboriginal dancer, was brutally beaten by cops and died in a police van in 1993.

In November 2004 Doomadgee was beaten to death in the police jail on Palm Island, off the northern Queensland coast. A coroner’s report released in September 2006 ruled that Queensland cop Christopher Hurley

was responsible. Hurley, the first cop in the state of Queensland to be put on trial for an Aboriginal death in custody, was found not guilty in June 2007 by an all-white jury.

The rally also called for lifting the gag order on Lex Wotton, who in 2008 was sentenced to six years in jail for “inciting a riot” on Palm Island. Following the initial autopsy in 2004 that exonerated the cops of killing Doomadgee, angry residents of the Palm Island Aboriginal community burned down the police station, barracks, and courthouse.

On July 19 Wotton was released under onerous conditions. He is banned from public meetings and venues where gambling is conducted, and from speaking to the media. He is also required to have a permit to travel interstate.

On November 11 at a lunch hosted by the Maritime Union of Australia in Sydney, Wotton was able to thank those who have supported his struggle. Speaking there, Aboriginal activist Lyall Munro compared the gag order to old bylaws that existed under the racist Aboriginal “Protection” Act in Queensland.



Militant/Linda Harris

Rally in Brisbane, Australia, against cop violence was part of national actions held November 13.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

FLORIDA

Miami

Politics and Culture at the Venezuela Book Fair: A Participant’s Account. Speaker: Naomi Craine, volunteer at Pathfinder booth. Sat., Dec. 4. Dinner, 6 p.m.; program, 7 p.m. 719 NE 79 St. (One block east of Biscayne). Tel.: (305) 757-8869.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Reportback from Venezuela International Book Fair. Speaker: John Hawkins, volunteer at Pathfinder booth. Sat., Dec. 4. Dinner, 7 p.m.; program, 8 p.m. 3557 S Archer Ave. (Orange line to 35th & Archer). Tel.: (773) 890-1190.

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Reportback from Venezuela International Book Fair. Speaker: Róger Calero, volunteer at Pathfinder booth. Fri., Dec. 3. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. 307 W 36th St., 10th floor. (North elevators). Tel.: (212) 736-2540.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Black Liberation and the Road to Workers Power: Communist Workers Movement vs. Pan-Africanist Socialism. Speaker: Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 3, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 3701 Pulaski Ave. Tel.: (215) 225-1270.

TEXAS

Houston

Reportback from Venezuela International Book Fair. Speaker: Steve Warshell, volunteer at Pathfinder booth. Sat., Dec. 4, 7:30 p.m. 4800 W 34th St., Suite C-51A. Tel.: (713) 688-4919.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Trade Tensions between Europe and U.S.—Rulers Continue Austerity Drives against Working Classes. Fri., Dec. 3, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$5. 5418 Rainier Ave. S. (#7 or #9 bus to Orcas, walk 2 blocks south). Tel.: (206) 323-1755.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

New Zealand Mine Disaster: No Miner Has to Die! Speaker: Joanne Kuniansky, Communist League. Sat., Dec. 4, 6 p.m. Upstairs, 281-7 Beamish St., Campsie. Tel.: (02) 9718-9698.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

The Struggle against Military Rule in Myanmar. Speaker: Patrick Brown, Communist League. Fri., Dec. 3, 7 p.m. Donation: \$5 waged, \$2 unwaged. 4/125 Grafton Rd. Tel.: (09) 369-1223.

Union vote at Delta again falls short of majority

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

MINNEAPOLIS—In a 5,024–5,569 vote, baggage handlers and ramp workers at Delta Air Lines lost a widely contested vote for representation by the International Association of Machinists (IAM). Earlier in November, flight attendants from the combined workforces of Delta and Northwest Airlines—roughly 20,000 workers—decided not to join the Association of Flight Attendants by an even narrower margin.

“With the number of ‘no’ votes combined with those that didn’t vote, those of us who are pro-union did not reach enough of our coworkers to convince them of the importance of having a union,” said Marty Knaeble, a Delta baggage handler.

The election was the first in the airline industry where a union is recognized if a majority of the votes cast are in favor. In the past, workers in the airlines and the railroads who didn’t vote were counted as “no” votes. With this change, many were confident a majority would vote for the union.

Knaeble said workers “were just beginning to absorb the blow they had been dealt.” He said the fact that Delta workers were given a raise in the fall, resulting in wages about \$3 per hour more than unionized workers from Northwest, was also a factor. This may have swayed workers to vote against the union.

Of the 13,000 baggage handlers, 81

percent voted in the election. About 5,000 of the workers were working under a union contract. In 2008 Delta’s largely nonunionized workforce of nearly 34,000 merged with Northwest’s 16,700 unionized workers.

“I thought we had a better chance of winning,” said Roland Baker, a ramp worker for 20 years, mostly with Northwest Airlines. “It really hurts to see this.”

“This affects us, but also all working people,” said Tony White, a ramp worker with 13 years. “We’ve been union for so long, now we’re non-union.”

White said he wished he had been “more involved in building support for the union. I did some phone banking but I should have done more.”

Baker said that he wasn’t sure what should be done now. “We’ll wait and see. For sure we know the company will go after us, especially our work rules.”

Davie Lee, who has worked at



Militant/Frank Forrestal

Meeting in Minneapolis October 17 to support unionization drive by Delta Air Lines workers for representation by International Association of Machinists.

Northwest for 16 years, said the union vote was “a blow.” As for what should be done, Lee said “we have to start fighting, something we haven’t really done yet. We need to figure out how to bring the union back.”

The two election defeats mean that about 33,000 formerly organized

workers are now without a union.

There are two more votes. Voting by 700 stock and store clerks ends November 22 and the IAM is seeking union representation for 16,500 customer service workers, 5,000 of whom are from Northwest. Voting ends December 7.

South Korea military provokes Pyongyang

Continued from front page

ue taking merciless military counteractions.”

Some 70,000 South Korean troops were in Yeonpyeong conducting joint military maneuvers with the U.S. Marines and Air Force, simulating an invasion of the North. The massive ex-

ercises involved 50 warships, 90 helicopters, and 500 planes. The DPRK said the maneuvers were a “means to provoke a war.”

South Korea’s defense minister, Kim Tae Young, said November 21 that the government was considering reintroducing U.S. nuclear weapons

in South Korea. Seoul later said it is not officially requesting the weapons, which were purportedly removed from South Korea in the 1990s. Washington, however, does have nuclear weapons targeting the region and 28,000 U.S. troops based in South Korea.

Three days before the incident, Siegfried Hecker, former director of the U.S. Los Alamos nuclear laboratory, said he visited a North Korean nuclear facility November 12 where he saw some 2,000 centrifuges that he believed could produce almost enough highly-enriched uranium to build a nuclear bomb.

The U.S. State Department seized on this to announce it opposed resumption of talks with North Korea over ending its nuclear program, which Pyongyang has agreed to do in exchange for normalization of relations, food, and other aid. But Washington has failed to uphold its part of the agreement and has continued its military provocations and economic sanctions.

— SELLING OUR PRESS AT THE PLANT GATE —

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—Supporters of the *Militant* here have been regularly selling at the early morning shift changes of Beak and Johnston, a meatpacking and food processing plant with a multinational workforce.

One immigrant worker from Africa recently bought a copy of the *Militant*, saying he had already been shown the paper by a socialist who works at the plant. He later bought a subscription along with the book *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes from that same worker inside the factory. A young Maori worker who recently arrived from New Zealand told the team, “I used to get that paper outside the meatworks” there.

Over the past few months, one or two papers, and sometimes the special *Militant* supplement that has the introduction to the *Workers Power* book, have been sold each week. Helped by those political discussions, socialists inside the plant sold three copies of the book

and two subscriptions during the recent circulation drive.

A number of workers, especially of African origin, have expressed interest in books by revolutionary leaders Thomas Sankara and Che Guevara. A young Palestinian worker bought a copy of *The First and Second Declarations of Havana* in Arabic.

BY ALYSON KENNEDY

CHICAGO—Ilona Gersh and Betsy Farley sell the *Militant* regularly at the gate of the Borg Warner transmission plant in Bellwood, a working-class suburb on the west side of this city. The team sells between 5 and 15 copies of the *Militant* each time and recently sold a subscription.

One socialist worker who works at the plant reports that he has met new people in the factory interested in politics because of the team’s effort. “A coworker who stopped to talk to the team later bought a copy of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*

from me,” he said.

Supporters of the *Militant* in Chicago also sell at the Ford assembly plant and at Stampede, a meatpacking plant where workers are trying to win representation by the United Food and Commercial Workers union. Twenty-two workers bought the *Militant* at Stampede last week. Several workers proudly showed team members their union cards. One worker, who purchased the paper, explained, “I’m considered a temp, so I only make minimum wage. We really need the union so we can get equal treatment and a wage increase.”

Workers send in bribes from bosses to help build the communist movement

Three workers at an ice cream plant in Washington, D.C., recently sent in their bonuses totaling \$137 to the Capital Fund, which raises money for long-term projects of the communist movement.

The company pays varying bonuses most months, said Ned Measel, one of the three, based on “controlling waste, efficiency, and other factors.”

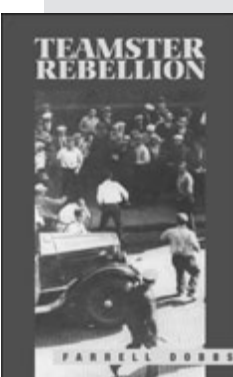
“Some workers work harder to try and maximize the bonus, but most don’t,” Measel said. “It’s blood money because it’s part of the company’s continuous efforts to get workers to exert themselves, taking on more and more production tasks, and to take greater responsibility for organizing profitable—as opposed to safe and efficient for workers—production.

“It’s also part of providing a ‘pay package’ aimed at discouraging workers turning to organizing a union. There’s no better use for it than to go to the production of books like *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power*,” he added.

Clay Dennison, a paper mill worker in Washington State, sent in a check for \$560, what’s left after taxes of a \$750 lump-sum payment. “It’s in ‘lieu of a raise,’ as it says in the current union contract,” Dennison noted. “The payment is for accepting a wage freeze this year, and it looks like blood money to me.”

Janice Lynn in Atlanta works for a company that gives a “gas card to everyone on their birthday—part of the many small bribes it gives to get workers to identify with the company, work faster, and cut across any talk about a union,” she wrote. Lynn sent in \$15, the amount on the gas card, to the fund.

—SETH GALINSKY




Teamster Rebellion

The 1934 strikes that built the industrial union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, recounted by a central leader.

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Petition campaign to free Oscar López launched

BY SETH GALINSKY

There is a new campaign to win freedom for Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López Rivera. Jailed in the United States since 1981, López, 67, is one of the longest-held political prisoners in the world.

López was convicted of “seditious conspiracy” and accused of being a leader of the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN), which called for independence for Puerto Rico, still a U.S. colony.

In the early 1970s López was well-known in the Puerto Rican community in Chicago. He was a founder of Rafael Cancel Miranda High School and participated in launching the Committee to Free the Five Puerto Rican Nationalists.

The U.S. government said the FALN was responsible for a series of bombings beginning in 1974. López, like 11 other independence supporters arrested in 1980, refused to recognize the authority of the U.S. courts and was sentenced to 55 years in prison.

In 1987 López and three others were convicted on frame-up charges of conspiracy to escape from prison. Fifteen more years were tacked on to his sentence.

From 1986 to 1998, López was kept in solitary confinement under what attorney Jan Susler described as “conditions not unlike those at Guantánamo under which ‘enemy combatants’ are held.”

An international campaign won his transfer to the federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, and release into the general prison population in 1998. López has created a large number of paintings and drawings, especially around political themes.

In 1999, in the face of growing protests against U.S. colonial domination of Puerto Rico, U.S. president William Clinton pardoned 11 of 17 Puerto Rican political prisoners held at the time.

López refused to accept the commutation offer, because it required him to serve 10 more years before being released and did not include all the Puerto Rican political prisoners. The release on parole in July of political prisoner Carlos Alberto Torres, arrested in 1980, has spurred demands to free López.

The campaign to free López is seeking to get more than 10,000 signatures on a petition and letters to President

Barack Obama calling for his immediate release. Information on the campaign is available at boricuahumanrights.org and ProlibertadWeb.com. Letters can be sent to: Oscar López Rivera, #87651-024, FCI Terre Haute, PO Box 33, Terre Haute, IN 47808.

Puerto Rican political prisoner Avelino González Claudio, arrested in February 2008, was recently transferred to prison in Texas. Letters can be sent to: Avelino González Claudio #09873-000, FCI Bastrop, PO Box 1010, Bastrop, TX 78602.



Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López Rivera, center, with visiting family members at federal prison in Terre Haute, Indiana, October 2009. Imprisoned since 1981, López is among longest-held political prisoners in the world.

Guantánamo inmate convicted in civilian trial

BY ANGEL LARISCY

In the first civilian trial of a Guantánamo detainee on terror charges, Ahmed Ghailani was found guilty of one charge and acquitted of 284 other counts, including 224 charges of murder.

The Tanzania native was accused of involvement in the 1998 bombings of two U.S. embassies in East Africa. Convicted on a charge of conspiring to damage U.S. property, he faces a minimum of 20 years and up to life in prison.

The verdict has renewed debate over whether to try remaining Guantánamo detainees in civilian courts or military tribunals.

In the tribunals the judge and jury are military personnel appointed by the Pentagon. The prosecution is allowed to use secret evidence, hearsay, and statements obtained through torture. A defendant cannot see or challenge the government’s secret evidence.

At Ghailani’s trial U.S. District Judge Lewis Kaplan ruled out use of some “evidence” the prosecution wanted to use because it was obtained by torturing Ghailani.

Sen. John McCain said on the radio show “Imus in the Morning” that the verdict in the Ghailani case proved military commissions should be used to “get the job done.”

“This tragic verdict demonstrates the absolute insanity of the Obama administration’s decision to try al-Qaeda terrorists in civilian courts,” said Rep. Peter King of New York, the ranking Republican on the Homeland Security Committee. “We must treat them as wartime

enemies and try them in military commissions at Guantánamo.”

Defending the civilian trial, Judge Kaplan told jurors, “You have demonstrated . . . that American justice can be delivered calmly, deliberately and fairly, by ordinary people.”

One thing “American justice” didn’t allow was any testimony on conditions at the U.S. naval base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, where Ghailani was held, or about the years he spent overseas in “black site” prisons run by the CIA. The judge also ruled that although Ghailani has been held more than five years with-

out being brought to trial, his right to a speedy trial was not violated.

There remain 174 prisoners held in Guantánamo. Of these the Obama administration is hoping to try 40 in civilian court. Some 48 others will be held indefinitely because the government says they are too dangerous to release.

When Obama took office in early 2009 he issued an executive order pledging to close the prison at Guantánamo Bay in a year. Now two years in office there is no sign his pledge will be fulfilled anytime soon.

From Peru, worker fights to reverse his deportation

BY SETH GALINSKY

U.S. immigration authorities recently sent a letter instructing Peruvian immigrant Moisés Mory to appear at a November 16 hearing in Newark, New Jersey, on his application for temporary residency.

There’s just one problem: on September 8 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) deported Mory to Peru.

Mory waged a decade-long fight to remain in the United States. He was arrested by immigration agents in 1998 and held for a year, and then arrested again in May 2004 and held for four and a half years. At the time of his second arrest he was president of United Steelworkers of America Local 13742

at a factory in New Jersey, where he worked as a machine operator.

In prison Mory fought for his rights and those of other inmates. His struggle won attention, including coverage in Spanish-language media.

Mory’s wife Ruth, lawyer Glenn Troublefield, and family friend Luz La Torre went to the November 16 hearing. The hearing officer called in a supervisor after being told that Mory had been deported. The two officers conceded that Mory should not have been deported before the hearing.

According to La Torre, the immigration officers said they would make a decision soon on whether Mory could return to the United States for a new hearing.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



December 6, 1985

The apartheid system took at least 42 more Black lives in the week leading up to November 24.

Thirteen people were reported killed November 21 when police opened fire on a march of about 50,000 people, mostly women, in the township of Mamelodi.

Residents of the township had refused to go to work that day. They staged the march to protest a new restriction barring funerals on weekends, the occupation of the township by troops, and increases in rent and utility costs.

The National Union of Mineworkers scored a victory October 31 when an industrial court ordered the reinstatement of miners fired for participating in the miners’ strike in September.



December 5, 1960

DEC. 1—The suspension of constitutional rights by Venezuelan President Betancourt and his use of military force to quell demonstrations of workers and students has brought that country the serious risk of a renewed army dictatorship.

After the hated Jimenez dictatorship was toppled in 1958, Betancourt was elected on the basis of promises to bring urgently needed social reforms to the country which suffers misery and deprivation while U.S. tycoons plunder its rich oil resources.

Betancourt’s failure to carry out his campaign promises paralleled his efforts to stamp out popular sympathy for the Cuban revolution.



December 14, 1935

Confronted by a tidal wave of mass protest which has been mounting ever since the formation of the Joint Committee to Aid the Herndon Defense ended Angelo Herndon’s isolation from the broad labor and radical movements, the State of Georgia has executed its first retreat.

Judge Hugh M. Dorsey of Atlanta has declared unconstitutional the 1866 “slave insurrection” law, under which Herndon was sentenced to an 18–20 year term on the chain gang.

He was forced to release Herndon because neither the Talmadge faction nor the Roosevelt faction of Georgia politicians wants to go before the workers to justify Herndon’s conviction.

Puerto Rico: Independence is a Necessity
by Rafael Cancel Miranda

In two interviews the Puerto Rican independence leader speaks out on the brutal reality of U.S. colonial domination, the example of Cuba’s socialist revolution, and the resurgence of the independence movement today.

\$6

Is Socialist Revolution in the U.S. Possible?
A Necessary Debate
by Mary-Alice Waters

Waters explains why a socialist revolution in the United States is possible. Why revolutionary struggles by working people are inevitable—initiated not by the toilers, but forced upon us by the crisis-driven assaults of the propertied classes.

\$7

Australia meeting expands military ties with U.S. gov't

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—Increased military cooperation between the Australian and U.S. governments was the central theme at an annual ministerial meeting held November 8 in Melbourne.

The day before, Labor prime minister Julia Gillard called the decades-long alliance with Washington the “foundation stone” of the Australian government’s foreign policy. A delegation headed by U.S. secretary of state Hillary Clinton, U.S. defense secretary Robert Gates, and U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff chairman Adm. Michael Mullen met their Australian counterparts led by Foreign Minister Kevin Rudd and Defence Minister Stephen Smith.

They announced plans for expanded U.S. access to Australian military bases and more “joint facilities.” The two powers will step up war exercises in Australia alongside other allied forces.

The talks also discussed the role of the Australian military in Afghanistan and elsewhere. Common objectives in the Asia-Pacific region with the rise of China and the shifting balance of power in the region were also key topics.

In a column in the November 19 *Australian*, Gillard wrote, “Australia will remain engaged in Afghanistan for the next decade at least.” Canberra has 1,550 military personnel operating there, mainly in Uruzgan Province. This is the largest non-NATO foreign force in Afghanistan.

The U.S. envoys stressed that Washington was now more interested in “places, not bases.” This refers to ports, airstrips, and other facilities in allied countries adapted for regular use by Washington, but that are not U.S. military bases as such. Canberra is rearming its military with compatible equipment for greater “interoperability” with U.S. forces.

The U.S. military already conducts regular exercises with Australian forces in northern Australia. The next biennial war practice will be at Shoalwater Bay, Queensland, in 2011.

New “places” in Australia under consideration include army and air bases in Townsville, north Queensland; the port of Darwin, as well as air weapons and field training

areas in the Northern Territory; and naval and air bases in Western Australia.

A new system to track ballistic missiles and satellites in the Southern Hemisphere was discussed. The preferred site is the North West Cape communications base in Western Australia, already used by Washington to contact and position nuclear submarines.

The plans also include stepped-up joint space-based intelligence gathering and cyber warfare. Joint facilities for U.S. satellite eavesdropping and control networks already exist at Pine Gap in central Australia, and Geraldton in Western Australia.

Washington is “determined to strengthen and deepen” its “strong alliances” with Australia, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, and Thailand,” Clinton said. Washington is also developing various regional summits among Asian governments.

Gates indicated Washington was concerned about China’s growing naval power and that the U.S. military is undertaking a “global review” of its force posture. Mullen insisted the U.S. would continue to exercise “freedom of navigation” in “international waters” near China.

Clinton stopped for two days in



Australian Department of Defence/Sgt. Mick Davis

Australian supply convoy from Kandahar to base in Uruzgan Province May 16. Convoy mission Tor Ghar IV involved some 100 vehicles and 200 Australian and Afghan soldiers. Australian government has 1,550 troops in Afghanistan, the largest non-NATO foreign force.

New Zealand en route to Australia. Rudd said the Australian government lobbied Washington to bring its smaller ally “in from the cold.” Military cooperation between the govern-

ments of the United States and New Zealand diminished after a dispute in 1986 over Wellington’s exclusion of nuclear armed and powered ships from its ports.

U.S. raids, demolition of homes in Afghanistan

Continued from front page

arrival. U.S. troops have responded by extensive leveling of homes and other buildings, with rough estimates ranging anywhere from hundreds to thousands, according to the *New York Times*.

Aerial bombings are up markedly and detested nighttime commando raids on Afghan residences have accelerated since President Barack Obama replaced Gen. Stanley McChrystal with Gen. David Petraeus as top commander. Special forces have conducted nearly 1,600 such raids in the last three months—roughly 200 percent more than the period just prior to Petraeus’s appointment, and six times higher than last year.

The night raids and other tactics are cornerstones of Petraeus’s “counterinsurgency” strategy aimed at displacing the Taliban’s influence with

U.S.-backed local and national power structures. One benefit of the home demolition, a senior officer told the *Times*, is that it forces residents to file complaints with the district governor. “In effect you’re connecting the government to the people,” he said.

Feeling the heat from many corners, Karzai called on Washington to reduce its military operations, begin troop reductions next year, and cease night raids. “If there is any raid, it has to be done by the Afghan government,” he said in a November 13 interview with the *Washington Post*.

Karzai also talked about preliminary discussions he said he had with Taliban representatives several months ago. “They feel that same way as we do here. That too many people are suffering for no reason. Their own families are suffering.” Mullah Mohammad Omar, former head of the Taliban government in Afghanistan, called reports on the talks “misleading rumors.”

Petraeus rebuked Karzai’s comments as undermining recent progress against the Taliban and skipped a scheduled meeting with the president.

Afghan foreign minister Zalmay Rasoul also criticized Washington’s military strategy at a recent meeting with the Iranian foreign minister in Tehran that showcased increasing ties between the two countries, reported News Network International of Pakistan.

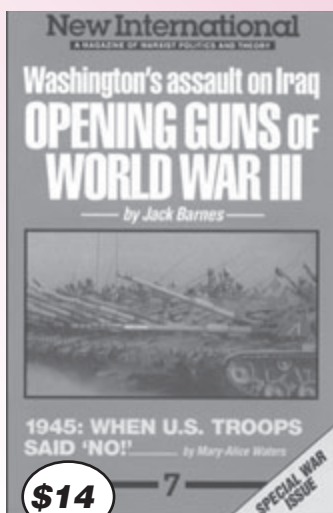
Washington and Kabul maintain agreement on many fronts. One of these is increased support to various local rulers and their armies, a key aspect of the developing U.S. counterin-

surgency strategy. In a number of cases, local despots and their henchmen have proved to be more reliable and effective allies against Taliban forces than government troops.

One of these figures is Col. Abdul Razzik, who U.S. officials used to refer to as a “malignant actor,” according to the *Wall Street Journal*. Operating from Spin Boldak, a district on the Pakistani border in Kandahar Province, Razzik is widely resented by the population for his reputation for drug trafficking, extortion, and general banditry. But his army of 250 men is so feared by the people and Taliban alike that both fled as his forces entered Panjway, west of Kandahar City. Local residents say Razzik is known to force civilians to walk ahead of his troops to clear the way of mines. He has political connections to Karzai’s brother, a powerful politician in Kandahar widely considered to be a major heroin trafficker with ties to the CIA.

In another example, several private soldiers under the command of Matiullah Khan, regional warlord of neighboring Uruzgan Province, were flown last month to Australia to receive training from elite commandos there, according to the *Brisbane Times*. Dutch military forces, who had responsibility for the province before they pulled out in August, had earlier worked to marginalize Matiullah for fear that his association with the government would boost support for the Taliban because of his reputation for brutality. Matiullah, whose nearly 1,000-strong mercenary army is considered the most formidable force in Uruzgan Province, is also a Karzai ally.

New International MAGAZINE OF MARXIST POLITICS AND THEORY



The devastation of Iraq in 1990 did not lead to the dawn of a “new world order,” but sounded the opening guns of sharpening conflicts and class battles that will decide whether the horrors of World War III are inflicted on humanity . . . or a road is opened by working people to a socialist future of international human solidarity.

Issue no. 7

In this issue:

Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq
by Jack Barnes

Communist Policy in Wartime as well as in Peacetime
by Mary-Alice Waters

Communism, the Working Class, and Anti-imperialist Struggle: Lessons from the Iran-Iraq War
Two documents with introduction
by Samad Sharif

PathfinderPress.com

‘Workers Power’ book presented in Venezuela

BY STEVE WARSHALL
AND MAGGIE TROWE

CARACAS, Venezuela—The Spanish-language edition of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* by Jack Barnes was the subject of a panel discussion here at the sixth annual Venezuela International Book Fair November 20, the busiest night of the fair. Forty-five people, many of them Afro-Venezuelan, packed the tent where the event was held, and 30 more listened outside to all or part of the meeting.

Speakers included Enrique Arrieta, general coordinator of the Network of Afro-Venezuelan Organizations; Carolina Alvarez, director of the Book and Reading Platform, a government agency that organizes book distribution to state-run bookstores and educational institutions, in the nearby state of Aragua; and John Hawkins, a member of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States who is the party’s candidate for mayor of Chicago. The event was moderated by Róger Calero of the SWP.

“This book gives us a perspective in the fight for socialism,” Arrieta said in his opening remarks. “It helps us understand the place of the struggles of oppressed nationalities” in that fight.

Arrieta said that the book explains how Malcolm X evolved as a political person and a revolutionary. “Barnes gives us a view of Malcolm X that few have put forward—that of a leader of the working class,” he added.

Struggle against racism in Venezuela

Arrieta tied this discussion about *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* with the struggles of working people in Venezuela, pointing out that a draft law against racism is before Venezuela’s National Assembly. “We have not yet conquered racism here,” he said.

Alvarez spoke about a section of the book titled, “What the Bolshevik Revolution Taught Us.”

She explained that racism doesn’t only affect blacks in Venezuela, but others as well, especially indigenous people. “Before the Russian Revolution, socialists tended to put aside the national struggle,” she said. “But that revolution taught the necessity of demanding and winning self-determination. Those struggles are part of making a revolution, not a diversion from it.”

Alvarez highlighted the sections of the book that include discussions be-

tween Leon Trotsky, a leader of the Russian Revolution along with V. I. Lenin, and communists living in the United States in the mid-1930s.

“Trotsky explained why we need to build revolutionary parties that are proletarian in composition as well as in program,” Alvarez continued. She referred to Trotsky’s insistence that workers needed to be rapidly incorporated into the ranks of the party and its leadership, and how involvement in the struggles of Blacks was a central aspect of that communist perspective.

In his comments Hawkins noted, “*Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* is a book about building the movement that fights for the dictatorship of the proletariat, a book about building the world communist movement.”

“The book offers unimpeachable evidence that workers who are Black will comprise a disproportionately weighty part of the ranks and leadership of the mass social movement that will make a proletarian revolution,” Hawkins said.

It explains why this revolutionary conquest of state power is necessary and why that new state power provides working people the “mightiest weapon possible” to wage the ongoing battle against Black oppression and every form of exploitation and human degradation inherited from millennia of class-divided society.

“It also details the last year of Malcolm X’s life, and how he became the face and the authentic voice of the forces of the coming American revolution. It is the record of the programmatic and strategic conclusions communists have drawn from decades of practical activity in the class struggle in the United States, including in the fight for Black rights,” Hawkins concluded.

The presentations were followed by an animated discussion period.

Blacks not victims but in vanguard

An audience member asked Hawkins, “You say Blacks are a force, but how can that be true when there are 50 million living in poverty in the United States who don’t get enough to eat?”

Lucas Gil, a leader of the Afro Committee against Discrimination and Xenophobia, another group of Afro-Venezuelan activists, spoke from the audience about the long history of struggles by blacks in Colombia and Venezuela. “We have had to fight racism and xenophobia” for many decades, he said,



Militant/Arnold Weissberg

Panel November 20 discusses *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* at sixth Venezuela International Book Fair. From left, Carolina Alvarez, director of Book and Reading Platform; John Hawkins, Socialist Workers Party; Róger Calero, SWP and moderator; and Enrique Arrieta, general coordinator of the Network of Afro-Venezuelan Organizations.

pointing to the blacks who fought with Simón Bolívar between 1819 and 1830 in the struggles across Latin America for independence from Spanish colonial rule.

“Blacks in the United States are an oppressed nationality,” Hawkins pointed out. “But their place in the class struggle doesn’t come from being victims of capitalism, rather it is the history of workers and farmers who are Black consistently being in the vanguard of the class struggle in the U.S. that explains the force we are talking about.”

“What is the role of women in the struggle for workers power?” asked Alba Carosio, director of the Women’s Studies Center at the Central University of Venezuela in Caracas.

A man asked about the difference in discrimination in the United States and Latin America. Another person asked the speakers to comment more about why capitalism reproduces racism as part of its system of social relations.

“Capitalism is structurally racist,” Arrieta responded. “It needs to pose the superiority of Europeans and whites in order to rule the world. If there is capitalism, there is racism.”

Alvarez added, “The capitalists say

the problem is the Colombian taking the Venezuelan job or the woman taking the man’s job. If we’re divided, we’re easier to exploit. But it’s the resistance, not the oppression, that matters the most.”

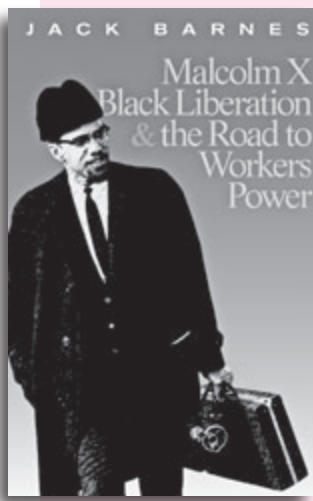
Capitalism needs racism and sexism

“Capitalism needs racism and discrimination in order to divide the working class,” Hawkins said. “The question is both political and economic. Racism, as does sexism, makes possible the super-exploitation of layers of the working class. That’s why it’s not possible to eradicate racism without taking power away from the capitalists.”

“After taking power we continue to fight against the legacy of racism, as well as discrimination against women. The Cuban Revolution teaches us this.”

Nine copies of *Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power* were sold to participants in the discussion, although many had already bought it earlier at the book fair. After talking informally for half an hour after the meeting ended, 16 people, including all the speakers, went to a local restaurant to continue the discussion.

Malcolm X, Black Liberation, and the Road to Workers Power by Jack Barnes



“This is a book about the dictatorship of capital and the road to the dictatorship of the proletariat. A book about the last century and a half of class struggle in the United States—from the Civil War and Radical Reconstruction to today—and the unimpeachable evidence it offers that workers who are Black will comprise a disproportionately weighty part of the ranks and leadership of the mass social movement that will make a proletarian revolution. . . .”

\$20

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Militant/Arnold Weissberg

Overflow crowd attended panel on busiest night of book fair. Animated discussion period followed speakers’ presentations.

Class struggle transforms workers in fight for power

Below is an excerpt from An Introduction to the Logic of Marxism by George Novack, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for November. In a series of lectures originally presented in 1942 Novack explains that communists are materialists, dialectical materialists. Marxists start with facts, with social realities, and how they change over history—shaped by shifting productive relations, social labor, and revolutionary activity. Pulling together the rich history, lessons, and the logic of the working-class struggle, dialectical materialism is a tool for workers who seek to organize a proletarian revolutionary movement to fight for political power, replacing the decaying capitalist system with socialism. Copyright © 1969 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY GEORGE NOVACK

The elements of dialectical logic can be learned by anyone with a determina-

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

tion to study them. The acquisition of any science requires the expenditure of considerable labor time and mental energy. It was long ago pointed out that there is no royal road to knowledge. Capitalists acquire profits without personal labor. But do workers who earn a living and strain to learn the operation of a new



Domestic workers in New York rally for union rights, June 2009. Through their struggles workers become aware of their real relations to capitalist exploiters, explains Novack. “From having been more or less capitalist-minded, the advanced workers become really proletarian-minded; from having been more or less reactionary, they become revolutionary in thought and deed.”

and complex machine need to be told that they must also exert effort to learn something new or to acquire knowledge of a new instrument of thought?

Since thinking deals with obscure events and complex processes studied by natural and social scientists, there are fields in which logic requires specialized knowledge and training. But we all think about matters close at hand and perfectly familiar to everyone. By the same token dialectics as a science of thought, as a logic, also deals with the most commonplace affairs.

To be sure, dialectical logic approaches these affairs in a somewhat unusual way. We propose to show how dialectics arises out of the everyday life and struggles of the workers; how it reflects the workings of their minds in the various aspects and successive phases of their class experience; and finally, how any thinking worker can verify the origin of these logical ideas and the operations of the laws of dialectics by reflecting upon and analyzing his own intellectual and political development from a “working stiff,” or even “scissor-bill,” to a revolutionary-minded worker.

In order to become a Marxist every worker has to revolutionize his political mentality. This change in his thinking does not and cannot take place all at once. It comes as the climax of a protracted process of development that includes manifold experiences in the class struggle and passing through various

stages of political understanding. The worker begins, as a rule, with complete ignorance of the real nature of capitalist society and of his position and prospects within it. He has gradually to extend and deepen his insight into the capitalist system until he clearly comprehends the mainsprings of its operations and the necessity for the proletarian struggle against it. . . .

Dialectics is the highest type of scientific knowledge of real processes. On the practical side it is the consummation and condensation of the rich and ripe experience of the working-class movement, embracing the widest range of forms and phases of the concrete struggles and experiments. On its theoretical side it is the highest product of scientific brainwork and investigation. Such knowledge comes as the reward of struggle and of labor.

The process of social and mental evolution which has here been ascribed to an individual worker likewise occurs among the entire class of workers, especially in its most advanced sections. Through their struggles the working masses become progressively aware, as they pass through rising levels of comprehensiveness, of their real relations to the capitalist exploiters. At any given moment in this process, different parts of the same class stand upon different heights of consciousness. While the most backward can remain stuck at the stage of class collaboration, the most advanced can have marched forward under

the spur of necessity and reached, and even surpassed, the point of irrepressible revolutionary conflict. The Russian as against the American workers in 1922, for example; the Cuban versus the American people in 1962.

When a sufficient number of workers emerge from the primitive state of absolute subservience and begin to differentiate themselves in theory and in practice and to oppose themselves to the capitalists, a change begins to take place in the social and political consciousness of that class. But for the class as a whole there has not yet occurred a qualitative leap in their political mentality. There is progress toward that end—but not yet enough change to produce a revolutionary transformation into its opposite. . . .

From having been more or less capitalist-minded, the advanced workers become really proletarian-minded; from having been more or less reactionary, they become revolutionary in thought and deed. . . .

The class struggle between capital and labor thus proceeds together with the workers' comprehension of its meaning through an interlocked series of events. Starting in the most advanced countries, it spreads throughout the world. Beginning in a single plant or industry, it seizes all the economic life of the country. Starting on the lowest level of theory and organization, it rises through successive stages, twistings and turnings, spurts and setbacks, first in episodic form, on to limited generalizations and then in a fully generalized form, until it reaches the peak of revolution. And then the process continues to develop dialectically—but upon a new and superior material social basis.

That is what is meant by the logic of history. This is an outline of the dialectics of the class struggle in our time, which moves from one stage to the next until it results in the revolutionary overthrow of the old world and the creation of a new social system. The materialist dialectic we have been studying derives its importance from the essential part it plays in this world-historical process. The abolition of capitalism through the triumph of socialism will be the final vindication of the truth, the power and the glory of materialist dialectics, the logic of Marxism. The task of revolutionary socialists is to realize this in life.

November
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OF THE MONTH

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U.S. hands off North Korea!

Working people the world over shouldn't be taken in by the big-business media's portrayal of Pyongyang as the aggressor in the recent exchange of fire between North and South Korean forces. U.S. imperialism is to blame for the instability on the peninsula and in the broader region. It's Washington's policies that pose a constant threat to the people of Korea.

The U.S. imperialists, along with their client regime in Seoul, have ceaselessly organized provocations against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. The November 23 artillery fire by the North Korean military took place as 70,000 South Korean troops, under U.S. command, were conducting massive military maneuvers simulating an invasion of the North from an island 10 miles off the North Korean coast.

The imperialist call for worldwide condemnation of North Korea is the latest in what has been decades of military and economic aggression by Washington against the Korean people. It was Washington that imposed a partition between the north and the south after World War II. It was Washington, under UN cover, which went to war against Korea in 1950 after working people in the

north carried out a socialist revolution.

Washington has callously denied the North Korean people normal access to food, fuel, and financing to develop their economy.

The Obama administration demands governments throughout the world punish North Korea for its nuclear program, while the U.S. government maintains the largest nuclear arsenal in the world, including weapons deployed in the northwest Pacific.

Washington's military and economic provocations against Korea are of a piece with its stepped-up war in Afghanistan and attacks on the people of Pakistan. They are also of a piece with the attacks on workers' standard of living in the United States that are intensifying as the bosses try to shore up their profits amid a crisis-ridden capitalist system.

Working people should demand an end to all sanctions against the Korean people and withdrawal of all U.S. troops, ships, and weapons—conventional and nuclear—from the Korean Peninsula and the Pacific. We should extend solidarity to the decades-long fight of the Korean people for reunification.

Farmers fight racist discrimination

Continued from front page

John, 65, raise hogs and produce hay on their 113-acre farm here. Along with other Black farmers in the area, they have been fighting for years to keep their land and continue farming. They discussed their ongoing struggle at a community pig roast held at their farm November 20.

"We shouldn't have to go through the extremes we've been through, over and over again, just to get by," said John Bonner.

In 1987 the Bonners, who began farming as sharecroppers working with their father, were finally able to buy back land that their family had owned in 1893 and later lost.

The Black farmers' case began in 1997 when hundreds of farmers filed a class-action lawsuit against the USDA for racist discrimination in loans and other farm programs. The case, known as *Pigford v. Glickman*, resulted in a consent decree in 1999. That settlement promised Black farmers a \$50,000 payment, as well as loan forgiveness, tax breaks, and priority consideration for future loans.

However, farmers had to provide "substantial evidence" of discrimination. Of the original 22,547 claims filed, 41 percent were denied. An additional 75,000 claims were also denied, on the basis that they were filed after a September 2000 deadline. A total of about \$1 billion was disbursed.

Farmers have been fighting since then to extend compensation to those farmers left out and to force the USDA to end its ongoing pattern of discrimination. In 2010 alone, there have been numerous protests by Black farmers in the South and in Washington, D.C.,

letting the federal government know they were not going to stop fighting.

An additional \$100 million was allocated in the 2008 Farm Bill to compensate the farmers. In May 2010 the House of Representatives approved \$1.15 billion more to pay farmers denied compensation for filing past the deadline. Now that this has passed in the Senate, the bill has to return to the U.S. House and then be signed into law by President Barack Obama. Gary Grant, president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA), issued a press release November 22. BFAA "cautions against drawing the conclusion that this matter is resolved," the release said.

"Further, BFAA has strong reservations about the use of surplus funding from the WIC [Women, Infants, Children food assistance program] to help offset the total package. How in the world, we wonder, can WIC have a nearly \$570 million surplus in these times? If folks who need food assistance have been bureaucratically removed from the rolls to create a surplus, we are outraged and others should be as well."

The Senate measure also allocated \$3.4 billion to settle another longstanding discrimination case by 300,000 Native Americans against the federal government for swindling them out of royalty payments for natural resources mined on tribal lands.

The Black farmers' determination to stand up to racist treatment at the hands of the government has inspired other farmers. In October, Native American farmers reached a separate settlement with the USDA over discrimination claims. Latino farmers and women farmers are also fighting USDA discrimination.

LETTERS

Maryland socialist

It saddens me that there were no Socialist candidates in Maryland in the recent elections. I seek aid in developing a base of Socialists here in Bel Air, Maryland. I write to ask about any possible way I could be put into contact with the Socialist Workers Party directly, in order to help me further the workers' goals in this dark corner of the political right.

*Nelson Meranski
Bel Air, Maryland*

Safe drinking water

One billion people worldwide do not have access to clean and safe drinking water. Yet one gallon of household bleach will treat 3,800 gallons of water. It takes only wa-

ter, salt, electrodes, and electricity to make bleach. The carbon rods in household batteries are all you need. An apparatus that an eighth-grade student could build for a science fair. Yet despite its simplicity it remains out of reach for 1 billion

'Militant' Prisoners' Fund

The Prisoners' Fund makes it possible to send prisoners reduced rate subscriptions. To donate, send a check or money order payable to the Militant and earmarked "Prisoners' Fund" to 306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor, New York, NY 10018.

people worldwide.

*Kim O'Brien
Willimantic, Connecticut*

Thank you

Thank you for reporting true news stories, even if it's not what everyone wants to hear.

*Lyndsey Waletzke
Austin, Minnesota*

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

U.S. economy

Continued from front page

stock in conjunction with the current offering.

As part of the bailout, General Motors closed 14 out of 47 plants, handed over responsibility for the employee health-care plan to the United Auto Workers union, reduced wages and benefits of autoworkers, and sped up the assembly line. Prior to the government takeover and GM's bankruptcy filing, the company had already cut its hourly workforce from 113,000 in 2006 to 61,000 in 2008. By February 2010 it was down to 46,000.

In the White House video, Austan Goolsbee, chairman of President Barack Obama's Council of Economic Advisers, says that Obama's instructions to implement drastic cost-cutting turned GM around. "Everyone had to sacrifice," Goolsbee said, to succeed in "saving American jobs."

"Everyone" means unionized workers at GM. New hires now earn about \$14 an hour, half what veteran workers make. GM threatened to close down Nexteer Automotive, a parts plant in Saginaw, Michigan, after workers rejected a wage freeze and a \$12-an-hour starting pay for new hires. Union officials repeated the vote; on the second round, workers approved the concessions.

While GM continues to press workers to cut wages and benefits, the company reported profits three quarters in a row, including more than \$1.9 billion in the most recent quarter alone.

Rising trade disputes add more uncertainty to the profits of U.S. capitalists. Some 72 percent of GM cars are sold outside the United States, many in China.

General Motors is one of many companies bolstering profits by pushing through two-tier wage systems, speedup, and benefit cuts.

Chrysler; Delphi auto parts; Caterpillar; Kohler, a kitchen and bath company; and Mercury Marine are among major manufacturers that have put two-tier systems in place, often coupled with indefinite wage freezes.

A new contract at Harley-Davidson includes a wage freeze, lower pay for new hires, expanded hiring of temporary workers, and fewer benefits. "This is absolutely a surrender for labor," union official Mike Masik Sr. told the *New York Times*.

Accelerating recovery

Bloomberg news service published a report November 18 titled "Economic Data Show U.S. Recovery Accelerating." The article stated, "Gains in incomes and stock prices are helping households repair tattered finances more than a year into the economic recovery that began in June 2009."

In spite of the upbeat tone, the figures it cites confirm that capitalists are not taking profits they get by wringing more from workers and investing to expand production, plants, or machinery. To the degree that they are investing, it is largely directed to stocks, bonds, and other ponzi schemes, based on the illusion that somehow money by itself can generate more wealth.

The working class is paying the price. According to the U.S. Department of Labor, the number of people out of work for a year or more grew from 645,000 in 2007 to 4.5 million in 2010, comprising a record high of almost 31 percent of those officially unemployed.

Two million workers, who have been receiving unemployment benefits for more than 26 weeks, could see their benefits run out by the end of December. Congress is not expected to reach an agreement extending the payments until after the current benefits expire.

Workers who have collected for 99 weeks are not eligible for more extensions. As many as 91,000 workers hit that mark each week and are cut from the benefit rolls.

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